

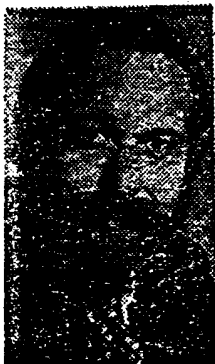
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'Unleash' CIA? How short are our memories!

Personal view/Jay A. Miller

HOW SHORT are our memories! As reflected in political and editorial columns this spring, the press seems to have forgotten the CIA propaganda and to have forgotten why it was that Congress originally began its weak attempt to exert some modicum of control over the intelligence agencies.

In incredible understatement, the need for strict congressional oversight has been attributed to "past CIA mistakes."



JAY A. MILLER

It was in 1974, after the furor over the CIA's role in overthrowing the elected government of Chile, that Congress passed the Hughes-Ryan amendment providing that covert action "other than activities intended solely for obtaining necessary intelligence" could be carried out only if the president found that the action was "important to the national security" and reported it "in a timely fashion . . . to the appropriate committee of the Congress."

THIS LAW CAN'T BE blamed for the CIA's failure to gather hard intelligence on the current Iranian situation. After all, no such law existed when the CIA advised President John F. Kennedy that Cubans would rise up and overthrow Fidel Castro if only we promoted an invasion of Cuba. This led to the Bay of Pigs fiasco. What was the CIA's excuse then?

The law was intended to stop one aspect of CIA activities: secret interference in the operation of other countries without the knowledge and permission of the president and at

least some other elected leaders.

When the Senate and the House completed their investigation in 1976, we all discovered that Chile was just the tip of the iceberg. It turned out that the CIA had been involved in attempted assassinations of foreign leaders, including a bizarre attempt on the life of Castro—and suspicion still lingers that this action led to the assassination of President Kennedy—as well as coups or manipulation of the elections in Central American, African, Middle Eastern and European countries.

Should such actions be taken without presidential and even limited congressional knowledge and approval?

Congressional investigations also revealed the CIA snled on U.S. citizens who were ac-

cused of no wrongdoing, secretly published books to propagandize and manipulate U.S. citizens and conducted dangerous experiments on U.S. citizens without their knowledge. Are we to tolerate such actions again?

The American Civil Liberties Union has worked with the Senate Intelligence Committee for four years to develop a charter for intelligence agencies. Our proposals would protect the rights of citizens and increase accountability without diminishing the agencies' effectiveness to provide the country with necessary intelligence.

Then the cry went up that excessive controls—and the threat of more controls—had demoralized the poor CIA, ruining its work. Yet, in spite of CIA propaganda to the con-

trary, there have been no major leaks of intelligence information traceable to Congress. And Herbert Scoville, a former high CIA official, has said that 95 percent of its information came from open sources.

The danger today is not the demoralization of the CIA, but rather that its past abuses have been forgotten. Instead of passing a strict charter that holds the CIA accountable for its activities, Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-N.Y.) and others seek to "unleash" it.

In the propaganda struggle, consideration of a charter was put off until next year. And the Hughes-Ryan amendment was repealed. To replace it, a few weeks ago the Senate passed a substitute oversight bill that would reduce the number of congressional committees receiving reports from the CIA from eight to two; but it would expand reporting requirements to include all intelligence agencies and such sensitive operations as U-2 overflights or the attempt to rescue hostages.

IN EXTRAORDINARY circumstances, the president can withhold advance information; but he is then required to report details of the operation to the committees—and justify the withholding as soon as possible.

The House is expected to vote favorably on the bill after the July recess.

In spite of the CIA's major attempt to get "unleashed," this session of Congress seems to have been a stand-off. We didn't get a charter that would clearly set standards, define limits and protect the rights of Americans; but the CIA must continue to report and can be held accountable.

As recent history has shown, what the CIA does can help push us toward war or peace. If it is ultimately successful in preventing a charter from being adopted, it could once again become a cancer on the body politic.

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